

## RESEARCH

## “We Olaf”: Pro[(x-)NP] constructions in Icelandic and beyond

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This article discusses and analyzes an unusual construction in Icelandic, with a plural pronoun in the singular reading and a directly juxtaposed or annexed NP (or DP), where, for example, *við Ólafur* (literally “we.NOM Olaf.NOM”) means ‘Olaf and I’. We refer to this construction as Pro[NP]. Pro[NP] constructions have been reported for a handful of languages that lack a case system. Icelandic, in contrast, is a case language, and Pro[NP] in this language is *case congruent*: the pronoun and its NP/DP annex are always in the same case. No such language has to our knowledge ever been described in detail before; we provide the first in-depth investigation of case-congruent Pro[NP]. The article further compares the Icelandic construction to apparently similar constructions, including English *we linguists* and the Russian type of Pro[x-NP], as in *my s Petej* (literally “we.NOM with Peter.INSTR”), meaning ‘Peter and I’, showing that the Icelandic construction differs from these, despite having similar (but not identical) semantic properties. We propose that plural personal pronouns consist of two parts: a set of variables, {X, Y}, that determine the form of the pronoun, and an NP annex, which constrains the interpretation of the Y variable. Typically, the annex is phonetically silent (bare plural pronouns), but the Icelandic construction is unusual in that the annex is partly overt, thereby allowing a rare insight into the construction of plural personal pronouns.

**Keywords:** Icelandic; inclusory constructions; plural pronoun constructions; plural pronouns; Pro[NP]s; Pro[x-NP]s; Russian; pronominal lock

## 1 Introduction

The constructions exemplified by the Finnish and Russian sentences in (1) are cross-linguistically common.

- (1) *Finnish* (Holmberg & Kurki 2019: 244)
- a. **Me**      *mentiin* *Annan*      *kanssa kaupunkiin.*  
we.NOM went.1PL Anna.GEN with town  
‘Anna and I went into town.’/‘We went into town with Anna.’
- Russian* (Schwartz 1988a: 242)
- b. **My**      *s* *Petej*      *poedem.*  
we.NOM with Peter.INSTR will-go.1PL  
‘Peter and I will go.’/‘We will go with Peter.’

The constructions in (1) have a plural pronoun accompanied by another NP joined to the pronoun by a connector, meaning roughly ‘with’. The connector phrase is a sort of an *annex* (or a satellite) to the pronoun. The two can typically be either disjoint (as in (1a)) or adjacent (as in (1b)), forming a phrase together in the latter case (see, e.g., Lichtenberk 2000; Vassilieva & Larsson 2005; Holmberg & Kurki 2019). A surprising hallmark of the

construction is that the *plural* pronoun can have a *singular* reading. Constructions of this type are found in many languages “from families that include (but are not limited to) Afroasiatic (Chadic), Algic, Australian, Austronesian (Malayo-Polynesian), Indo-European (Baltic, Celtic, Germanic, Romance, Slavonic), Mayan, Niger-Congo, Nilo-Saharan, Salishan, Siouan, Trans-New Guinea and Uralo-Altai” (Vassilieva & Larson 2005: 102). They have been referred to as Plural Pronoun Constructions (Schwartz 1988a, b; Aissen 1989; Vassilieva & Larson 2005; Cable 2017) or as Inclusory Constructions (Lichtenberk 2000; Singer 2001; Haspelmath 2007).<sup>1</sup> Neither term is entirely satisfactory (as also pointed out by Holmberg & Kurki 2019), so we opt for the theory-neutral *Plural Pronoun[x-NP/NP-x] Construction* instead, **Pro [x-NP]** for short, where *x* stands for the connector.<sup>2</sup>

According to Schwartz (1988a: 242), the languages in her sample with Pro[x-NP] that also have a case system make a case distinction between the pronoun and the annexed NP, “as if the connector were functioning as a case-assigning preposition”. In the Russian example in (1b), for instance, the pronoun *my* is nominative while *Petej* is in the instrumental. Such a case split is also seen in the absence of a distinct connector in examples like Hungarian *Mi elmentünk Jancsival* “we went.1PL Johnny-with” = ‘I left with Johnny’, where the pronoun *mi* ‘we’ is nominative, while *Jancsival* is in the instrumental (Moravcsik 2003: 480). We take this to support the view that case affixes in Finno-Ugric languages are commonly adpositions (Asbury 2010). Accordingly, we subsume the Hungarian type under Pro[x-NP] constructions (including postpositional Pro[NP-x]).

There is also a related but a much rarer construction that has neither a case split nor an overt connector, which is illustrated in (2).

- (2) *Yapese* (Haspelmath 2007: 33)
- a. **gimeew** Wag  
you.PL Wag  
‘you.SG and Wag.’
- Mokilese* (Schwartz 1988a: 239)
- b. **Kamwa** Davy inla dudu.  
you.DU David go swim  
‘You.SG and David went swimming.’
- Kpelle* (Schwartz 1985: 172)
- c. **ta** Sumo  
they Sumo  
‘he and Sumo.’

We refer to this construction as *Pro[NP]*. It lacks an overt connector, thus having a plural pronoun and a directly juxtaposed or annexed NP. Symptomatically, though, it shares a basic property with Pro[x-NP] constructions: the *plural* pronoun commonly has a *singular* reading. We refer to this reading as the *Pro[(x-)NP] reading*. We take the singular reading of the plural pronoun to be the most interesting and the defining property of Pro[(x-)NP] constructions.

We know of only a handful of Pro[NP] languages and of no detailed descriptions of any such language, with the sole exception of the description of Toqabaqita in Lichtenberk

<sup>1</sup> We use the term “inclusive” in a different sense, see Section 3.2.

<sup>2</sup> We use “NP” as a cover term for noun phases of various sizes, including nPs, NumPs, Art(icle)Ps, and full DPs. See Sections 2 and 5 (and, e.g., Julien 2005; Pfaff 2015). As first pointed out to us by Birgitta Edelman (personal communication), Fenno-Swedish has Pro[x-NP]s, as in *Vi för med Anna till stan* “we went with Anna to town” = ‘Anna and I went into town’ (Holmberg & Kurki 2019). This construction is absent from other Scandinavian varieties, including other varieties of Swedish. Holmberg & Kurki (2019) suggest that it is due to language contact with Finnish.

(2000). The absence of a case split between the pronoun and the NP annex in the Yapese, Mokilese, and Kpelle examples in (2), as also in Toqabaqita, is unspectacular, as none of these languages have case systems. However, Icelandic is a Pro[NP] language with a case system, and in this language the Pro[NP] construction is always *case congruent*. We illustrate this in (3) (for only nominative *við* ‘we’).

- (3) **Við** Ólafur/\*Ólaf/\*Ólafi/\*Ólafs fórum.  
 we.NOM Olaf.NOM/\*ACC/\*DAT/\*GEN went.1PL  
 ‘Olaf and I went/left.’/‘Olaf and we went/left.’

As seen in (3), the construction is ambiguous between a singular and a plural reading of the plural pronoun (and the plural reading, in turn, is ambiguous in the same way as *we* in general: ‘I and you.SG/PL’, ‘I and they’, etc.). The unexpected singular reading is the more neutral and the much more common of the two. The plural reading is usually difficult to get and often far-fetched, but it can be forced in certain contexts, at least for some speakers (as in “Have you seen Peter<sub>i</sub> recently? Yes, I<sub>k</sub> saw him yesterday. We<sub>i+k</sub> Olaf are all going to the movies together tonight”). However, many speakers cannot get the plural reading at all (instead requiring coordination, “we<sub>i+k</sub> and Olof”).<sup>3</sup> We will thus focus on the singular reading for the most part.<sup>4</sup>

Icelandic Pro[NP] has been sporadically mentioned in the literature (see, e.g., Sigurðsson 2006; Thráinsson 2007; Wood 2009). However, it has never been described or analyzed in detail; to our knowledge, no case congruent Pro[NP] constructions ever have. In this article we aim at providing both a description and a comprehensive analysis of the Icelandic Pro[NP] construction.

We connect our analysis to a broader understanding of the structure of plural pronouns and build on the idea that plural pronouns are constructed from sets of variables, {X, Y} (a key idea also pursued in Vassilieva & Larson 2005, although differently implemented; see also Holmberg & Kurki 2019). The primary X variable is fixed, as the speaker ( $X_{SP}$ ), the addressee ( $X_{AD}$ ), or a non-speaker/non-addressee ( $X_{-SP/-AD}$ ): *we* = { $X_{SP}$ , Y}, *you.PL* = { $X_{AD}$ , Y}, and *they* = { $X_{-SP/-AD}$ , Y}.<sup>5</sup> The Y variable, in turn, is open to interpretation/reconstruction, depending on the context, but it can be constrained or specified in a number of ways. We assume that *all plural pronouns* have an NP annex, and that the specification of the Y variable is provided by the NP annex, silently in the case of bare plural pronouns, but overtly in Pro[NP]. Our approach is unorthodox, but we believe it is on the right track, and that it throws a new and an interesting light on the nature of plural pronouns.

What is special about the Icelandic Pro[NP] construction, then, is not the pronoun itself, but lies in the fact that the annex can be partly overt. Our analysis entails that pronouns do not have presyntactically specified semantics but spell out features whose interpretation is syntax- and context-dependent.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>3</sup> As the plural reading is possible for the first author of this article, we did not check this with informants. However, a reviewer reports that only one of seven Icelandic informants he asked accepted the plural reading.

<sup>4</sup> The singular/plural distinction here refers to the fact that the annex contains a silent conjunct (see Section 5) that either includes only a singular referent of the pronoun (for instance the speaker) or a plural referent (for example the speaker plus someone else). In another sense, as pointed out by a reviewer, the pronoun always has a plural interpretation, referring simultaneously to the overt annex and the silent conjunct. We use the notion “singular reading” exclusively in the sense “singular reading of the silent conjunct”.

<sup>5</sup> Singular pronouns are also variables, but we will not consider them here.

<sup>6</sup> The X and Y variables are (partly) interpreted in relation to the context. Thus, our approach is compatible with analyses that assume that pronouns, in part, get context-bound interpretations, such as Sigurðsson’s context-linking approach (in 2004 and much subsequent work) and the presuppositional approach of Heim (2008). We abstain from detailing about this here, though.

The structure of the article is as follows. In Section 2, we provide a basic description of the Icelandic Pro[NP]. Section 3 discusses two constructions that are ostensibly similar to Pro[NP], the Preproprial Construction ("he/the Olaf") and adnominal pronoun constructions like *we linguists*, and describes several ways in which they are distinct from Pro[NP]. In Section 4, we analyze the relation between the pronoun and the annex, proposing that it is an *indirect* head-complement relation, mediated by a silent element that heads the annex (bringing the construction (partly) in line with the Russian/Finnish type of Pro[x-NP]). We refer to this silent element as *the lock*. In Section 5, we defend our analysis of Pro[NP] and argue that it reveals more general properties of how plural pronouns are constructed and interpreted. Section 6 concludes.

## 2 Pro[NP] with singular annexes (including coordinated ones)

In this section we provide a fairly theory-neutral description of the Icelandic Pro[NP] construction with singular annexes (and a singular reading of the pronoun).

Pro[NP] is a productive and general construction in Icelandic. It is thus found for all three persons and all three genders, as illustrated in (4)–(6). As indicated in (5) and (6), third person plural pronouns in Pro[NP] normally require a linguistic antecedent (in contrast to the first and the second person pronouns). Pluralities of mixed third person genders are expressed by neuter, see (6).

- (4) a. **Við** María fórum.  
we.NOM Mary.NOM went.1PL  
'Mary and I went/left.'
- b. **Þið** María fóruð.  
you.PL.NOM Mary.NOM went.2PL  
'Mary and **you.SG** went/left.'
- (5) a. Anna ... **Þær**/\*Þeir María fóru.  
Anna ... they.F.NOM /\*M.NOM Mary.NOM went.3PL  
'Anna<sub>i</sub> ... Mary and **she<sub>i</sub>** went/left.'
- b. Pétur ... **Þeir**/\*Þær Ólafur fóru.  
Peter ... they.M.NOM /\*F.NOM Olaf.NOM went.3PL  
'Peter<sub>i</sub> ... Olaf and **he<sub>i</sub>** went/left.'
- (6) a. Ólafur ... **Þau** María fóru.  
Olaf ... they.N.NOM Mary.NOM went.3PL  
'Olaf<sub>i</sub> ... Mary and **he<sub>i</sub>** went/left.'
- b. María ... **Þau** Ólafur fóru.  
Mary they.N.NOM Olaf.NOM went.3PL  
'Mary<sub>i</sub> ... Olaf and **she<sub>i</sub>** went/left.'

In passing, we note that Pro[NP] is overwhelmingly more common in the language, in all persons and genders, than coordination of a name and a singular pronoun, such as *ég og María* 'I and Mary' and *María og ég*, as confirmed by searches (2019-10-15) in corpora: <http://timarit.is/> and <http://málheildir.árnastofnun.is>. These are written language corpora, but, as far as we can tell, this also applies to the spoken language.

Case congruent Pro[NP] of this sort is found in all three persons in Old Norse as well,<sup>7</sup> and for at least the third person in runic Swedish, as in *þau kitilmuntr* “they.N Ketilmund.M” = ‘Ketilmund and she’ (Wessén 1965: 60), suggesting that it is a Proto-Scandinavian or a Proto-Germanic inheritance. It has been completely lost in the modern Mainland Scandinavian languages (Danish, Norwegian, Swedish), but it is found in Faroese, the closest relative of Icelandic, albeit not as robustly as in Icelandic.<sup>8</sup> We limit our description to Modern Icelandic.

Icelandic Pro[NP], then, is found for all persons and genders. It is also free to occur in all four cases (NOM, ACC, DAT, GEN) and in all grammatical functions, as subjects (nominative or quirky), direct objects, indirect objects, prepositional objects, possessives, or as dislocated DPs.<sup>9</sup> This is partly illustrated in (7) (there is an ACC/DAT syncretism in the first person plural pronoun paradigm).

- |     |    |   |                     |
|-----|----|---|---------------------|
| (7) | a. | <b>Okkur</b> Ólafi leiddist.<br>us.DAT Olaf.DAT bored<br>‘Olaf and I were bored.’                       | Quirky subject      |
|     | b. | Hún sá <b>okkur</b> Ólaf.<br>she saw us.ACC Olaf.ACC<br>‘She saw Olaf and me.’                          | Direct object       |
|     | c. | Hún er vinur <b>okkar</b> Ólafs.<br>she is friend our.GEN Olaf.GEN<br>‘She is a friend of Olaf and me.’ | Possessive genitive |

Pro[NP]s are also well-formed in ECM infinitives and as controllers of PRO (“she believed **us Olaf** be intelligent” = ‘she believed Olaf and me to be intelligent’, “**we Olaf** tried to win match-the” = ‘Olaf and I tried to win the match’).

The pronoun shows clear head properties in relation to the annex, controlling agreement at the clausal level. That is to say: the pronoun controls person (1, 2, 3) and number (PL) agreement of the finite verb, as seen in (4)–(6). In addition, it controls number (PL), gender (M, F, N), and case (NOM, ACC, DAT, GEN) agreement of adjectival and participial predicates. This is partly illustrated in (8).

<sup>7</sup> Old Icelandic distinguished between dual and plural *við/vér* ‘we.DU/PL’ and *þið/þér* ‘you.DU/PL’ (a distinction that gradually disappeared in the 14<sup>th</sup> to the 18<sup>th</sup> centuries, the plural forms becoming honorific and largely obsolete, while the old dual forms became general plurals, including both dual and plural readings, see Guðmundsson 1972). A search (2018-08-30) in the Saga Corpus in <http://malheildir.arnastofnun.is> reveals that both the duals and the plurals occur in Pro[NP] in the corpus, both with names and nouns like *bræður* ‘brothers’, thus suggesting that plural readings of the pronouns have long been available, although singular readings are prevailing in both the old and the modern language. For example, only a single example of a Pro[NP] with plural *þér* + a person name is found in the Saga Corpus (*þér Eyvindur*, in *Egils saga*) while the number of Pro[NP]s with dual *þið* + a person name is 20. The corresponding figures for dual *við* and plural *vér* are 70 versus 4, respectively. Overall, the plurals *þér* and *vér* are much more common in the corpus than are the duals, *þið* and *við* (*þér* about three times as common as *þið*, *vér* more than twice as common as *við*).

<sup>8</sup> We have only limited information on Pro[NP] in Faroese. Höskuldur Þráinsson did us the favor of asking a few Faroese colleagues about this, and their answers indicate that the type *vit Hjalmar* “we Hjalmar” is marked but not excluded, *vit báðir Hjalmar* “we both Hjalmar” being more natural. See also Lockwood (1955: 115). The third person type *teir Zakaris* “they Zakaris” seems to be even more marked, but the answers nevertheless indicate that it is not totally alien (as it is in modern Mainland Scandinavian). The type *vit báðir Hjalmar* “we both Hjalmar” is reminiscent of what Haspelmath (2007: 36) refers to as *summary conjunction*. It is non-existent in Icelandic.

<sup>9</sup> In this respect, Icelandic differs from some Pro[x-NP] languages. Thus, Holmberg & Kurki (2019) show that Pro[x-NP] (i.e., Pro[NP-x]) is possible in Finnish if and only if it is the structurally highest human argument.

- (8) a. **Þeir** Ólafur eru sterkir.  
 they.M.PL.NOM Olaf.NOM are.3PL strong.M.PL.NOM  
 ‘Olaf and he are strong.’ a male + Olaf
- b. **Þær** María eru sterkar.  
 they.F.PL.NOM Mary.NOM are.3PL strong.F.PL.NOM  
 ‘Mary and she are strong.’ a female + Mary
- c. **Þau** Ólafur eru sterk.  
 they.N.PL.NOM Olaf.NOM are.3PL strong.N.PL.NOM  
 ‘Olaf and she/it are strong.’ a non-male + Olaf
- d. **Þau** María eru sterk.  
 they.N.PL.NOM Mary.NOM are.3PL strong.N.PL.NOM  
 ‘Mary and he/it are strong.’ a non-female + Mary

As seen, the NP annex never affects or interferes with agreement. In addition, we note that plain first and second plural pronouns *can* be truth-functionally equivalent with Pro[NP]: plain *við* and *þið* can (obviously) refer to ‘Olaf and I/we’ and ‘Olaf and you’. Third person plural pronouns in Pro[NP], in contrast, normally require a linguistic antecedent, see (5) and (6). Given an appropriate context, though, plain *þeir*, *þær*, *þau* can of course refer to ‘Olaf and Peter’, ‘Mary and Anna’, and ‘Olaf and Mary’, respectively (in which case all individuals involved must usually have been overtly expressed in the preceding context, and not only some of them, as in Pro[NP]). Pro[x-NP] in languages such as Finnish and Russian has or can have comitative readings (‘I/we with Olaf’), in addition to coordination readings (see Cable 2017; Homberg & Kurki 2019), but this is never the case in Icelandic. Icelandic Pro[NP] has *no readings* that plain plural pronouns cannot have. Overtly expressing the annex obviously disambiguates the reference set of the pronoun, but it does not add any reading that the pronoun cannot have by itself, given the right context. We will return to this important issue in Section 5.

The order of the pronoun and its annex cannot be reversed: *við/þið/þær/þau María* and *við/þið/þeir/þau Ólafur* but *\*María við/þið/þær/þau* and *\*Ólafur við/þið/þeir/þau*. As far as we know, this is also commonly true of Pro[x-NP] languages, but, in at least many such languages, the pronoun and its x-NP (or NP-x) annex can be disjoint (as seen for Finnish in (1a); see also Vassilieva & Larson 2005: 111–112 on Russian Pro[x-NP]). This is impossible in Icelandic; the pronoun and its NP annex are always adjacent, locked together, regardless of case and grammatical function. While orders like “**we Mary** have both been there” and “Olaf had seen **us Mary** there” are perfect, splitting the annex “Mary” from its pronoun leads to sharp ungrammaticality. This is illustrated in (9) and (10).

- (9) a. **Við** **María** höfum bæði verið þar.  
 we.NOM Mary.NOM have both been there.  
 ‘Mary and I have both been there.’
- b. \***Við** höfum **María** bæði verið þar.
- (10) a. Ólafur hafði séð **okkur Maríu** þar.  
 Olaf had seen us.ACC Mary.ACC there  
 ‘Olaf had seen Mary and me there.’
- b. \*Ólafur hafði séð **okkur** þar **Maríu**.

Also, the pronoun cannot be expanded: \**við á Brekku Ólafur* “we in Brekka [a farm name] Olaf”. In contrast, the annex may be expanded: *við Ólafur á Brekku* ‘we Olaf in Brekka’ = ‘Olaf in Brekka and I’, an issue we will return to in Section 4.

All this might seem to suggest that Pro[NP]s are just regular DPs, with the pronoun as a head or a determiner and the NP annex as its direct complement. However, such an analysis cannot be upheld. For one thing, nouns in Icelandic can, in marked circumstances, precede determiners, as in *myndiskur þessi* “DVD this” = ‘this DVD’, *Ólafur þessi* “Olaf this” = ‘this [person] Olaf’, *kona sú* “woman that” = ‘that woman’, or *kona ein* “woman one” = ‘one/a woman’ (see Sigurðardóttir 2019 on *kona ein*; see also <http://timarit.is> for more examples).<sup>10</sup> In contrast, as already stated, the annex in Pro[NP] can *never* precede the pronominal head, \**Ólafur við*, suggesting that the structure of *við Ólafur* is not parallel to the structure of ordinary DPs, such as *þessi Ólafur/Ólafur þessi*, and so on. We assume that the type *Ólafur þessi* is derived from the more neutral *þessi Ólafur* by *Ólafur* moving out of [<sub>DP</sub> þessi Ólafur] and adjoining to the DP, yielding [<sub>DP</sub> Ólafur<sub>i</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> þessi  <sub>i</sub>]]. Moving *Ólafur* in this way out of *við Ólafur* is completely blocked, which is not surprising if the structure of *við Ólafur* is different from that of *þessi Ólafur*, an issue we will return to.

Further, as we will see, the connection between the pronoun and its annex in Pro[NP] is rather different from that seen between a head and its direct complement, Pro[NP] instead being parallel to plain plural pronouns. We will return to this. Before we can do so, we need to, first, describe the properties of the annex, and, second, analyze its relation to the pronoun. We will describe the annex in the remainder of this section, turning to the analysis of the pronoun-annex relation in Section 4. In between, in Section 3, we discuss constructions that are seemingly similar to but in fact different from Pro[NP].

The annex in Pro[NP] must normally be part of the common ground, presumably for the same reason as the silent referents of bare plural pronouns must usually be part of the common ground (i.e., in, e.g., *we* = ‘I and x’, x must normally be part of the common ground). It is typically a personal name, either a regular one, such as *Ólafur*, or a simplified/short form, such as *Óli*. Many other categories are possible as well, though, including short form kinship terms (*mamma* ‘mom(my)’, *pabbi* ‘dad(dy)’, etc.), domestic animal names (*Snati*, a dog, etc., with a personification effect), definite animate group noun NPs, often denoting occupations (*kennarinn* ‘the teacher’, etc.), and plural noun reciprocals, such as *vinirnir* ‘the friends’ and *systurnar* ‘the sisters’.<sup>11</sup> Some of this is illustrated in (11).

- (11) a. *Við mamma förum.*  
we mom go.1PL  
‘Mom and I will go.’
- b. *Við kennarinn förum.*  
we teacher-the go.1PL  
‘The teacher and I will go.’
- c. *Við strákurinn förum.*  
we boy-the go.1PL  
‘The boy and I will go.’

<sup>10</sup> This is not uncommon, but it is stylistically marked, and it is also marked in the sense that it is largely limited to bare nouns, including names. While *myndiskur þessi* “DVD this” is well-formed, *myndiskur þessi nýi* “DVD this new” and *nýi myndiskur þessi* are aberrant.

<sup>11</sup> Nouns of this sort have inherent reciprocal semantics. *They are sisters* and *They are sisters of each other* are thus usually equivalent (Schwarz 2006: 9). In this respect, *sisters*, *friends*, *brothers*, *neighbors*, *colleagues*, and so on, differ from other plurals, such as *mothers*, *parents*, *employees*. Obviously, *They are mothers* is not equivalent with *#They are mothers of each other*.

- d. Við systurnar förum.  
we sisters-the go.1PL  
'My sister(s) and I will go.'

We will return to plural annexes, such as *systurnar* 'the sisters' in (11d), in Section 3.2, focusing on singular annexes in this section. Before proceeding with singular annexes, though, we note that the annex cannot easily be another pronoun, plural or singular: \**þið við* "you.PL we", \**þið ég* "you.PL I", \**þeir ég/þú* "they.M I/you.SG", and so on (in contrast to regular coordination, *þið og við* 'you.PL and we', *þið og ég* 'you.PL and I', *þeir og ég/þú* 'they.M and I/you.SG', etc.).<sup>12</sup>

The annex cannot be inanimate, apart from potential but normally quite far-fetched coercion under personification. In a fairy tale and other similar contexts, one could say things like *við/þið/þær bókin* "we/you.PL/they book-the" = 'the book and I/you.SG/she', but this is excluded in all regular contexts. Also, even in fairy tales, #*við/þið/þær náttúran* "we/you/they nature-the" is aberrant (unless *Náttúran* would be understood as a nickname for a person). This is parallel to the fact that plain *við/þið/þær* 'we/you.PL/they.F', without an overt annex, cannot normally refer to a human referent (the speaker, the addressee, a human non-speaker/non-addressee) and an inanimate or an abstract one, such as a book or nature.

The pronoun itself cannot normally have inanimate referents either. That is natural enough for the first and the second person pronouns, as these must include the speaker or the addressee, but this is also excluded for the third person pronouns, even though they commonly refer to inanimates. For example, masculine *þeir* 'they' may refer to *bátarnir* "boats-the.M", *bílarnir* "cars-the.M", or (albeit slightly more reluctantly) *báturinn og bíllinn* 'the boat and the car', but, apart from personification in fairy tales and the like, the referent of *þeir* (or *þær* or *þau*) in Pro[NP] cannot be inanimate: In regular contexts, *þeir Ólafur* means 'Olaf and he/they', where 'he/they' are male persons; it cannot mean anything like 'Olaf and the boat(s)'; nor can *þeir bíllinn* "they car-the" be used to mean 'the boat(s) and the car'.

The general rule, then, is that both the pronoun and its annex must have animate referents, normally human. Usually, the pronoun and its annex are companions, relatives or associates of some sort. However, even though this is generally the case, it is not a rule or a restriction, see the example in (12) (stated by a person who had never met Queen Elizabeth).

- (12) *Dagur* (1997-12-07: p. 24; <http://timarit.is/>)  
Nú eigum við Elísabet Englandsdrottning eitt sameiginlegt.  
now have we Elizabeth Englandsqueen one.thing common  
'Now, Elizabeth Queen of England and I have one thing in common.'

Furthermore, one can say things like (13).

- (13) "I was at the bus station, and there were two other people there, which I had never seen before, *ung stelpa* ('a young girl') and an old man. *Við stelpan* ("we girl-the" = 'the girl and I') let the old man enter the bus first."

<sup>12</sup> However, the intuitions are not as sharp in cases where the head pronoun can include the reading of the annexed pronoun, as in #*við þið* "we you.PL" and #*við þú* "we you.SG". According to our Russian informants, somewhat similar effects are found in Russian Pro[x-NP]s, albeit with considerable speaker variation. See also Vassilieva & Larson (2005: 117–118). As the facts are inconclusive in both languages, we abstain from trying to analyze them here. A reviewer asks whether *við þið stúdentar(nir)* "we you students(-the).PL" is possible. The answer is negative; if anything, it is even worse than plain #*við þið*.



Moravcsik (2003) and Daniel & Moravcsik (2013) assume that Icelandic Pro[NP] is an instantiation of the associative plural, as in Japanese *Tanaka-tachi* ‘Tanaka and his family or friends or associates’ and Hungarian *Péter-ék* ‘Peter and his family or friends or associates’, where the (silent) associate has a kind of a generic unspecific group reading.<sup>13</sup> While this kind of usage, as in *þeir Gunnar(r)* “they Gunnar” = ‘Gunnar and his follower(s)’ is seen in Old Icelandic, it is obsolete in the modern language. Actually, the pronoun and its annex can easily be adversaries or “dissociates”, as in (14) (where the speaker is a female).

- (14) a. Við Ólafur hötum hvort annað.  
 we Olaf hate each.N other.N  
 ‘Olaf and I [a female] hate each other.’
- b. Við María fyrirlítum hvor aðra.  
 we Mary despise each.F other.F  
 ‘Mary and I [a female] despise each other.’

*Singular* annexes in Pro[NP] are always semantically definite in Modern Icelandic. Indefinite singular *kennari* is ill-formed in Pro[NP]: \**Við/þið/þeir kennari* “we/you/they teacher”. Similarly, indefinite \**við móðir* “we mother”, in contrast to the semantically definite *við mamma* ‘(my) mom and I’, *við móðir mín* “we mother my” = ‘my mother and I’, and *við móðirin* “we mother-the” = ‘the mother and I’. The reason why this is the case is presumably that the annex must be a referential expression and part of the common ground, hence either a contextually salient, that is, definite, common noun NP or a name (or a name-like expression like ‘mom’). In a somewhat old-fashioned style, though, some singular formally indefinite occupational NPs can be annexes in Pro[NP]: *við prestur* “we priest” = ‘the priest and I’, and so on. The nouns involved typically denote (some of the) *traditional* occupations in the old farming society: *bóndi* ‘farmer’, *prestur* ‘priest’, *biskup* ‘bishop’, and so on. In all such cases, however, the formally indefinite noun must be semantically definite. *Við prestur* means ‘**the** priest and I’, and not ‘**a** priest and I’.<sup>14</sup> This is thus presumably a reflection of the fact that the suffixed definite article was an innovation in Old Icelandic and is still extending its domain in the modern language (see Nygaard 1906: 34 ff. on Old Icelandic; Þráinsson et al. 2015 on Modern Icelandic).

Many *plural* annexes are also well-formed in plural pronoun + NP constructions. We will discuss these in Section 3.2, in relation to the *we linguists* construction, found in English and many other languages. Here, we note that Pro[NP] annexes are easily expanded by coordination as in *við Ólafur og María*. This yields a systematic structural ambiguity: [[*við Ólafur*] og *María*] vs. [*við* [*Ólafur og María*]], the former meaning ‘[[Olaf and I], plus Mary]’, the latter meaning ‘[Olaf, Mary, and I (all together)]’.<sup>15</sup>

The semantics of *við Ólafur* is commonly “unified” (cf. Haspelmath 2007: 33): ‘I unified with Olaf’, ‘I in combination with Olaf’, or ‘I associated with Olaf’. However, even though this kind of semantics is common for Pro[NP], it is not mandatory. It seems to be derived from coordination semantics at the semantic/pragmatic interface (the C[conceptual]-I[intentional] interface). *Við Elísabet Englandsdrottning* in (12) and *við stelpa*n in (13) have

<sup>13</sup> Associative plurals are also found in English dialects, *John and ‘em*, and so on; see Montgomery & Hall 2004: xxxvii.

<sup>14</sup> Specificity is not a relevant factor here (in contrast to Finnish and Fenno-Swedish, see Holmberg & Kurki 2019). One can say: “I went there with (a) student”, where indefinite “student” is a specific student, but “we (a) student went there” is excluded, whereas “we student-**the** went there” = ‘the student and I went there’ is well-formed.

<sup>15</sup> Parallel facts are found for the second person, while the third person is slightly more complicated due to gender resolution, but we abstain from going into this here.

only plain coordination semantics, and the pronouns and their annexes in (14) are adverbials and not associates.

Pro[NP] is reminiscent of regular coordination. *Ólafur og ég* 'Olaf and I' and *ég og Ólafur* 'I and Olaf' mean more or less the same as *við Ólafur* in the singular reading of the pronoun; similarly, *við kennarinn* and *við mamma* (in the singular reading of the pronoun) mean more or less the same as *kennarinn og ég* 'the teacher and I' and *mamma og ég* '(my) mom and I', respectively. Nevertheless, coordination must be kept apart from Pro[NP]. First, while the unmarked reading of *við Ólafur* is 'I and Olaf', *við og Ólafur* can only mean 'we and Olaf'. Second, as we have seen, the order in Pro[NP] is irreversible, which makes it syntactically different from coordination, as conjuncts are generally reversible: *við og Ólafur* = *Ólafur og við* 'we and Olaf' = 'Olaf and we'. Third, conjuncts do not have any head properties in relation to each other, while the pronoun is the head of Pro[NP]. Fourth, of course, coordination is cross-linguistically widespread, in contrast to Pro[NP].

We will return to the comparison of Pro[NP] and coordination in Sections 4 and 5, where we add further evidence that the relation between the pronoun and the annex cannot be represented syntactically as coordination (whereas there is a silent coordination *internal* to the annex).

### 3 Comparison with other adnominal pronoun constructions

In this section, we discuss adnominal pronoun constructions that are seemingly similar to Pro[NP] but are in fact distinct from it. In Section 3.1, we compare Pro[NP] with a singular pronoun + name construction, type "he Olaf". In Section 3.2, we discuss plural pronouns + plural NPs (types *we linguists*, *we brothers*).

#### 3.1 Pro[NP] is not a preproprial construction

In this section, we compare Pro[NP] with a construction that at first sight might seem to be a Pro[NP] construction of sorts.

Icelandic, especially in the spoken language, commonly combines *singular* pronouns and names, as in *hann Ólafur* "he Olaf" = 'Olaf [you know who I mean]' and *hún María* "she Mary" = 'Mary [you know who I mean]'. Constructions of this sort are cross-linguistically widespread (some standard, some more colloquial/dialectal, some obligatory, some optional). See Lyons (1999: 121–123) and for example Delsing (1993, 2003); Holmberg and Sandström (2003); Longobardi (1994); Julien (2005); Sigurðsson (2006); Alexiadou et al. (2007); Christodoulelis (2014). The element accompanying the name is either a singular pronoun (as in Scandinavian) or a singular article (as in, e.g., Greek: *o Petros* "the Peter"). The singular pronouns/articles in these constructions are often referred to as "preproprial articles" (a term introduced into generative syntax in Delsing 1993). We opt for the term *preproprials* and refer to the construction as the *Preproprial Construction*, **PrC** for short, to clearly distinguish it from Pro[NP] with plural pronouns.<sup>16</sup> The Icelandic PrC has some properties in common with Pro[NP]. The preproprial is a pronoun, the following NP is typically a name, part of the common ground, they are case congruent, the two make up a phrase (DP), free to occur in all cases and syntactic functions, and their order is irreversible: *hann Ólafur* "he Olaf" but not *Ólafur hann* (as a single phrase, but grammatical in dislocation constructions, in contrast to \**Ólafur við*). However, there are also clear differences. First, PrCs are confined to the third person: *Ég, Ólafur* 'I, Olaf' and *þú, Ólafur* 'you, Olaf' are not PrCs, but appositional, just as in, for example, English. Second, there is no coordination-like relation between the pronoun and the following NP in PrCs: *hann Ólafur* cannot mean anything like 'Olaf and he'. Third, the annex in Pro[NP] can

<sup>16</sup> Sigurðsson (2006) misleadingly discussed Pro[NP] as if it was an instantiation or a subtype of PrC. See also Wood (2009).

easily be an animate common noun, as in *við kennarinn* ‘the teacher and I’, *þeir kennarinn* ‘the teacher and he’, while this is marginal in PrCs (the reading of *hann kennarinn* ‘he, the teacher’ is normally appositional, as English *he, the teacher*, rather than a PrC reading). Fourth, the pronoun in PrCs does not affect the reference of the PrC phrase. It is an article of sorts, a marker of familiarity (in Icelandic), indicating that the speaker assumes the addressee to know and easily identify the referent in question (a cross-linguistically common property of preproprios, see Christodoulelis 2014, albeit subject to cross-linguistic variation, see, e.g., Julien 2005). Crucially, it is not the semantic head or core of the PrC. *Hann Ólafur* means roughly ‘Olaf [you know who I mean]’ and can easily be replaced by mere *Ólafur*, without any change in reference and meaning, pragmatic presuppositions apart.

In Pro[NP], in contrast, the pronoun is the head, and *við Ólafur* cannot at all be replaced by mere *Ólafur*. This applies generally, even in topic drop contexts. Icelandic is not a (referential) pro drop language, but informal Icelandic is an extensive topic drop language (Sigurðsson & Maling 2010; Sigurðsson 2011), allowing, for example, sentences like (15a). In Pro[NP], however, the pronoun cannot be dropped, as illustrated in (15b).

- (15) a. (Við) fórum til Íslands.  
(we) went.1PL to Iceland  
‘We went to Iceland.’
- b. \*(Við) Ólafur fórum til Íslands.  
\*(we) Ólafur went.1PL to Iceland  
‘Olaf and I went to Iceland.’

A plural third person pronoun plus a coordinated NP, as in *þeir Ólafur og Pétur* ‘they Olaf and Peter’, is ambiguous between a Pro[NP] reading, ‘Olaf and Peter **and he**’ and a PrC reading, ‘(the) Olaf and Peter’, where *þeir* is a cataphoric determiner and the overtly mentioned individuals are the only ones involved.<sup>17</sup> PrC readings are excluded for the first and the second person: *við Ólafur og Pétur* necessarily includes the speaker (‘Olaf, Peter, and I’), and *þið Ólafur og Pétur* either includes the addressee (‘Olaf, Peter, and you’) or has an appositional vocative reading: ‘you, that is, Olaf and Peter’.

In sum, despite the initial similarity of PrC and Pro[NP], these constructions are distinct. Crucially, the pronoun in PrC is a determiner, while it is a true pronoun in Pro[NP], and the latter involves a silent coordination (within the annex, see Section 5), while there is no coordination in PrC. In addition, of course, PrC is cross-linguistically widespread, while Pro[NP] (in contrast to Pro[x-NP]) seems to be exceedingly rare.

### 3.2 Pro[NP] is not a regular adnominal pronoun construction

As previously illustrated, *singular* annexes in Pro[NP] must always be semantically definite in Modern Icelandic: *við málfræðingurinn* ‘we linguist-the’ = ‘the linguist and I’, but *\*við málfræðingur* ‘we linguist’, and so on. *Indefinite plurals*, on the other hand, commonly combine with plural pronouns, as in (16).<sup>18</sup>

- (16) a. við/þið Íslendingar ‘we/you Icelanders’, við/þið málfræðingar ‘we/you linguists’,  
b. við/þið bræður ‘we/you brothers’, við/þið frænkur ‘we/you (female) relatives/cousins’

<sup>17</sup> This type, in the PrC reading, is also found in Faroese (Weyhe 1996: 343) and at least sporadically in Old Swedish (Cecilia Falk, personal communication).

<sup>18</sup> The term “indefinite plurals” applies only to the complement of the pronoun, and not to the whole construction. As pointed out by a reviewer, the whole construction typically has a definite reading.

Constructions of this type (or these types) are commonly referred to as *adnominal pronoun constructions*, **APCs**, and have been widely discussed. See for example Postal (1966), Déchaine & Wiltschko (2002), and Höhn (2016: 17 ff., 2017, and the references there). They are cross-linguistically widespread, found in Russian, Swedish, German, English, and many other languages: *we linguists*, *you brothers*, and so on.<sup>19</sup> They primarily have reduced relative clause interpretations, with regular plural readings of the pronouns, ‘we, who are linguists’, ‘you.PL, who are brothers’, but they can also have a singular reading of the plural pronoun: ‘I and other linguists’, ‘you.SG and your brother(s)’, as in *You brothers should take better care of your mother* (where ‘you.SG and your brother(s)’ is the prominent reading). It is difficult to tell these readings apart, though. The singular readings might be derived from reduced relative clause readings at the C-I interface rather than being “syntactically independent” readings.

Singular readings of plural pronouns in APCs in, for example, English, German, and Swedish (*we linguists* = ‘I and other linguists’, etc.), are unacceptable or marginal to some speakers, while natural to others.<sup>20</sup> Inasmuch as such readings are possible, however, they are strictly *inclusive*, confined to “equals”, where the pronoun refers to a subset that is included in the set denoted by the NP-annex (set homogeneity). *We linguists* is only felicitous if the speaker is a linguist, and *you brothers* in the reading ‘you.SG and your brother(s)’, is possible only if the addressee is one of the brothers referred to. The same applies to Icelandic APCs, such as the ones in (16). In contrast, it is a salient property of Pro[NP], such as *við Ólafur*, that it is *non-inclusive*: the pronoun is (obviously) not included in the reference set of the annex.

*Definite plurals* can also combine with plural pronouns in English (as also in, e.g., German and Swedish), as in *we the linguists*, and so on, but these are typically appositional, ‘we, (that is,) the linguists’ (and can potentially, albeit less centrally, have a reduced relative clause reading, ‘we, who are/were the linguists’). Expressions of this sort are arguably structurally distinct from the *we linguists* type (see Höhn 2016; 2017, and the references there), but we set this aside here.

Parallel phrases in Icelandic can also have appositional and relative clause readings, but, in addition, they have a Pro[NP] reading; it is thus difficult to draw a sharp line between Icelandic Pro[NP] and Icelandic definite APCs. *Við málfræðingarnir* “we linguists-the”, can either have the inclusive reading ‘the other linguists and I’ (where the speaker is a linguist) or the non-inclusive Pro[NP] reading ‘the linguists and I’ (where the speaker is not a linguist). This holds generally of plural pronoun + plural NPs where the plural NP is or contains a group noun. See (17).

		<i>Inclusive reading</i>	<i>Non-inclusive reading</i>	
(17)	a.	<i>við kennararnir</i> we teachers-the	‘the other teachers and I’ (“I” = a teacher)	‘the teachers and I’ (“I” = not a teacher)
	b.	<i>við börnin</i> we children-the	‘the other children and I’ (“I” = a child)	‘the children and I’ (“I” = not a child)
	c.	<i>við Íslendingarnir</i> we Icelanders-the	‘the other Icelanders and I’ (“I” = an Icelandic)	‘the Icelanders and I’ (“I” = not an Icelandic)

<sup>19</sup> We disregard case variation in English constructions of this type: *we/us linguists*, and so on. We also disregard exclamative vocative expressions, such as *you idiot(s)!*, which often have a very different form from APC constructions (see Corver 2008; Julien 2016).

<sup>20</sup> Personal communication. For Swedish: Lars-Olaf Delsing, Verner Egerland, Elisabet Engdahl, Gunilla Lindholm, Gunlög Josefsson. For German: Werner Fry. For English: the second author of this article, Dianne Jonas, Joan Maling.

Plural pronouns + *definite plural noun reciprocals*, such as *við bræðurnir* “we brothers-the”, also have both inclusive and non-inclusive readings, meaning either ‘my brother(s) and I’ (where the speaker is one of the two or more brothers) or ‘the brothers and I’ (where the speaker is not included in the “brother set”). In contrast, *við bræður* ‘we brothers’, with an *indefinite noun reciprocal*, can only have the inclusive reading, ‘my brother(s) and I’ (plus a reduced relative clause reading, ‘we, who are brothers’).<sup>21</sup>

We sum up in (18).

- (18) a. *Singular annexes* are always semantically definite; they are (obviously) never inclusive:  
*við Ólafur* ‘Olaf and I’  
*við mamma* ‘(my) mom and I’  
*við málfræðingurinn* ‘the linguist and I’  
*við bróðirinn* “we brother-the” = ‘the brother (of somebody else) and I’
- b. *Plural definite annexes* are either inclusive or non-inclusive (where the inclusive readings are more central, easier to get, than the non-inclusive ones):  
*við mömmurnar* ‘the other moms and I’ / ‘the moms and I’  
*við málfræðingarnir* ‘the other linguists and I’ / ‘the linguists and I’  
*við bræðurnir* ‘my brother(s) and I’ / ‘the brothers and I’
- c. *Plural indefinite annexes* can only be inclusive:  
*við mömmur* ‘other mothers and I’  
*við málfræðingar* ‘other linguists and I’  
*við bræður* ‘my brother(s) and I’

Inclusive and non-inclusive pronouns + NPs seem to be distinct constructions. Inclusive plural pronoun + plural NPs (APCs), *we linguists* and so on, are cross-linguistically common. In contrast, non-inclusive Pro[NP] is rare.

Icelandic inclusive plural pronouns + plural NPs can have intonation breaks and appositional readings, *við, málfræðingar* ‘we, [that is] linguists’, / *við, málfræðingarnir* ‘we, [that is] the linguists’, while this is excluded for non-inclusive Pro[NP]. At least when these inclusive constructions do have breaks and appositional semantics, they seem to be structurally distinct from Pro[NP], an issue we will return to in Section 5. When they do not have these properties, they might be structural Pro[NP]s (in Icelandic), but we have not been able to find evidence that bears clearly on the issue, so we leave it at that.

We will disregard inclusive readings in the following and focus on non-inclusive Pro[NP] with a singular annex and a singular reading of the pronoun: *við Ólafur* “we Olaf” = ‘Olaf and I’, *þið mamma* “you.PL mom” = ‘(my) mom and you.SG’, *þeir málfræðingurinn* “they linguist-the” = ‘the linguist and he’, and so on. Such expressions are pure Pro[NP]s.

<sup>21</sup> A quick check of corpora, the Gigaword Corpus in <http://malheildir.arnastofnun.is> and <http://timarit.is/> (both 2018-08-22), shows that the indefinites (“pronoun brothers”) are more common than the definite ones (“pronoun bothers-the”).

*Við bræður* and *við bræðurnir*, in the inclusive reading, have a possessive operator, thus meaning ‘my brother(s) and I’. The introduction of the operator seems to be due to the inalienable semantics of the relational noun (it is otherwise absent in Pro[NP]). It is also noteworthy that plural *bræður(nir)* can have a singular reading in *við bræður(nir)*: ‘my **brother** and I’. This potential singularization is presumably due to the inherent reciprocal semantics of *bræður*. Informally: *brothers* = *x and y are each other’s brother*. It is absent in Pro[NP]s that do not contain a noun reciprocal: *við kenningararnir* “we teachers-the” and *við mömmurnar* “we moms-the” mean ‘the (other) **teachers** and I’ and ‘the (other) **moms** and I’.

### 3.3 Conclusion

Pro[NP] is special, not surprisingly in view of its rarity. It is distinct from the preproprial construction ("he Olaf"/"the Olaf"), and it is different from cross-linguistically widespread APCs (*we linguists/we, the linguists*). In the next section, we discuss the relationship between the pronoun and its annex, suggesting that the relation involves a silent head, which we refer to as *the lock*.

## 4 The relation between the pronoun and the annex: the lock hypothesis

As previously mentioned, the annex in Pro[NP] can be expanded: *við Ólafur á Brekku* "we Olaf in Brekka" = 'Olaf in Brekka and I'. There are some restrictions on this, though. While *þessi Ólafur* 'this [person] Olaf' is well-formed in most contexts, *?við þessi Ólafur* is unnatural; we find no examples of this sort in corpora. As *þessi* 'this' is a determiner, a high D-domain element, this might be taken to indicate that the annex is not a full DP, but, rather, a smaller category, perhaps an nP, a NumP or an Art(icle)P; see the extensive discussion of DP structure in Julien (2005); Roehrs (2006); Pfaff (2015); Ingason (2016); Harðarson (2017). However, as the type *?við þessi Ólafur* is not clearly ungrammatical, we assume that its markedness is not a matter of grammaticality, but rather a matter of style (and perhaps prosody), and that the annex may be either a full DP or a smaller category. In corpora (<http://timarit.is>), we find examples like *við Ólafur þessi* "we Olaf this" = 'this [person] Olaf and I' and *við Jón þessi* "we John this" = 'this [person] John and I'. Recall, from Section 2, that the order of determiners and bare nouns can be switched in full DPs: *þessi mynddiskur* 'this DVD', *þessi Ólafur* 'this [person] Olaf', vs. *mynddiskur þessi, Ólafur þessi*, and so on. The switched order, Noun-Det, as in *mynddiskur þessi*, is usually more marked than the unswitched Det-Noun order, but *við Ólafur þessi*, 'this [person] Olaf and I', is nevertheless more natural than *?við þessi Ólafur*; evidently, the name is preferably adjacent to the pronoun.

As we have seen, there is a silent or a concealed coordination semantics between the plural pronoun and its annex in Pro[NP]. However, as mentioned in Section 2, there are differences between overt coordination and Pro[NP]. We show some of these in (19).

	<i>Pro[NP]</i>	<i>Coordination</i>
(19)	a. við Ólafur 'Olaf and we/I'	við og Ólafur 'Olaf and we/*I'
	b. *Ólafur við	Ólafur og við
	c. *þeir við "they we"	þeir og við / við og þeir
	d. *þið ég "you.PL I"	þið og ég / ég og þið
	e. #við náttúran "we nature-the"	við og náttúran / náttúran og við

In addition, as previously mentioned, the pronoun in Pro[NP] cannot be expanded: *\*við á Brekku Ólafur* "we in Brekka Olaf". In contrast, pronouns in coordination can be expanded, much as in for example English. See (20) for just two examples.

(20)	a. við á Brekku *(og) Ólafur we in Brekka and Olaf 'we in Brekka and Olaf'
	b. við sem bjuggum á Brekku *(og) Ólafur we who lived in Brekka and Olaf 'we who lived in Brekka and Olaf'

Thus, the relation between the pronoun and the annex in Pro[NP] is much tighter than the one between the conjuncts in regular coordination. It is not obvious what it is, though.

A plain syntactic solution would be to say that the pronoun is a determiner and that the annex is its direct complement, say, [<sub>DP</sub> we [<sub>NP</sub> Olaf]], in line with a popular approach to English APCs, such as *we/you linguists*, initiated by Postal (1966) and reignited by Elbourne (2005) and Collins & Postal (2012), see also for example Vassilieva & Larson (2005), and Höhn (2016; 2017). One could then perhaps assume that *við Ólafur* is syntactically parallel to [<sub>DP</sub> the [<sub>NP</sub> man]] and that Pro[NP] readings merely arise at the C-I interface, due to the semantics of plural pronouns.

While the direct head-complement approach to APCs has been argued for in many works, including the references above, such an analysis is untenable for Icelandic Pro[NP]. First, as we have seen, the annex can be a larger category than nP, for example an Art(icle)P (see Pfaff 2015), as in *við málfræðingurinn* “we linguist-the” = ‘the linguist and I’, or even a full DP, as in *við Ólafur þessi* “we Olaf this” = ‘this [person] Olaf and I’. Second, there is a sharp contrast between *þessi Ólafur/Ólafur þessi* and *við Ólafur/\*Ólafur við*. While *Ólafur þessi* arguably involves movement of *Ólafur* out of [<sub>DP</sub> þessi Ólafur], yielding [<sub>DP</sub> Ólafur<sub>i</sub> [<sub>DP</sub> þessi <sub>-i</sub>]], such movement out of *við Ólafur*, yielding *\*Ólafur við*, is ungrammatical, indicating that the structure of *þessi Ólafur* is different from the structure of *við Ólafur*. Third, Icelandic plural pronouns do not seem to have any special properties as compared to plural pronouns in related languages, apart from the gender distinctions in the third person (which are, however, also found in many other languages). So, if things were as simple as this, we would expect, first, that Pro[NP] expressions like “we Olaf” and “you.PL mom” should be cross-linguistically widespread, contrary to fact, and, second, that *\*Ólafur við* should be available, also contrary to fact.

There are constructions that do involve a determiner and a name complement, such as English *this Mary*, not *that Mary*, or *the Mary I know is fun* (Matushansky 2006). This is also found in Icelandic, see (21) and (22).

- (21) **Þessi** María er betri en **hin** Marían.  
 this Mary is better than other Mary-the  
 ‘This Mary is better than the other Mary.’
- (22) a. **Sú** María sem ég þekki er skemmtileg.  
 the/that Mary who I know is fun  
 ‘The Mary I know is fun.’
- b. **Þær** Maríur sem ég þekki eru skemmtilegar.<sup>22</sup>  
 the/those Marys who I know are fun  
 ‘The/Those Marys I know are fun.’

These constructions do not have any silent or a concealed coordination semantics and are thus different from Pro[NP] examples such as “we Olaf” and “you.PL mom”. There is no question, though, that the pronoun is the head (or the label) in Pro[NP], but its relation to the annex is not a direct head-complement relation. There seems to be some hidden element or elements in the construction.

As Pro[NP] is clearly different from regular *direct* head-complement relations, we need to develop an alternative understanding of the relation between the pronoun and its annex. We propose that there is instead an *indirect* head-complement relation between the two, mediated by a silent element that heads the annex. We could refer to this silent head as simply *h* (for head), *F* (for functional category), or *P* or *p* (for preposition) but

<sup>22</sup> Using personal names in the plural is marked, but it is grammatical.

we opt for the notion *lock* instead, denoted as  $\kappa$ , to express the fact that the pronoun and the annex are always interlocked, cannot be broken apart. Given this, the structure of Pro[NP] expressions is as sketched in (23); the pronoun is the D head of the whole DP, and the annex is a maximal category  $\kappa$ P, headed by the silent lock.

(23)  $[_{DP} D [_{\kappa P} \kappa [NP]]]$

The lock may possibly be conceived of as a deficient or a “weak” head in the sense of Chomsky (2015) (or as a silent relator in the sense of den Dikken 2006).

Given this analysis, Icelandic Pro[NP] is structurally parallel to the Russian/Finnish Pro[x-NP] construction type, the difference being that the connector *x* is overt in Russian and Finnish, thereby making it possible for the annex to move from the pronoun (as discussed for Finnish by Holmberg & Kurki 2019).

As mentioned before, there is also another difference between Icelandic Pro[NP] and Russian/Finnish Pro[x-NP], namely that the Russian/Finnish constructions have or can have comitative semantics, in addition to coordination semantics, while this is excluded for Icelandic Pro[NP]. Evidently, the silent connector, the lock, does not add any semantics, in contrast to the overt ‘with’ connector in Russian and Finnish.<sup>23</sup>

The lock seems to be related to role linkers, such as Icelandic *sem*, English *as*, German *als*, etc., in constructions like *She was efficient as a priest/Hún var dugleg sem prestur*. This Icelandic *sem* (as German *als*, etc.), is a nonassigner of case, which would fit well with the *við Ólafur* construction. However, the lock is not the *same* element as the overt role linker or just a silent version of it. First, the overt linker has clear semantic import, while, as we have seen, *við Ólafur* has *no* detectable semantics that differ from plain *we* (in contrast to “we with Peter” in Russian, etc.), apart from the fact that *Ólafur* specifies or limits the reference set of the pronoun. Second, Icelandic NP<sub>1</sub> *sem* NP<sub>2</sub> is usually disjoint, much as for example English NP<sub>1</sub> *as* NP<sub>2</sub>. Third, as related languages have parallel elements, *as*, *als*, etc., claiming that the lock is a silent *sem* would seem to wrongly predict that Pro[NP] should be cross-linguistically common. Fourth, under this *sem* hypothesis, it would be unclear why the *sem* element must be spelled out in *hún sem prestur* ‘she as a priest’ (and in *hún ... sem prestur*), while it cannot at all be spelled out in Pro[NP]: \**við sem Ólafur*, and so on. In NP<sub>1</sub> (...) *sem* NP<sub>2</sub>, the *sem*-NP<sub>2</sub> phrase exhausts the comparison or the equalization with NP<sub>1</sub> (informally: ‘she as a priest [and not (necessarily) as anything else]’). This is excluded for Pro[NP]; it does not compare or equalize the pronoun and the overt annex. The reason for that, in turn, is that the annex also contains a silent conjunct, which means that comparison with the overt annex cannot be exhaustive, see Section 5. So, even though the lock shares some properties with overt *sem*, the two are distinct.

Having postulated the lock hypothesis, we turn to the analysis of the annex in the next section. The proposed analysis will eventually lead us to hypothesize that bare plural pronouns are Pro[NP]s in a disguise, with a silent lock *and* a silent annex.

<sup>23</sup> Cable (2017) shows that for some speakers there is a proximity requirement on the relation between the pronoun and the NP in its annex in Russian, as a result of the comitative semantics. That is, for these speakers, in a sentence like “we with father went to different stores” = ‘father and I went to different stores’, the speaker and the father must have gone together to the same different stores; both went together to store A, both went together to store B, and so on. There is no such proximity requirement in Icelandic Pro[NP]. In *Við pabbi fórum í mismunandi búðir* “we dad(dy) went to different stores”, the speaker and the father may either have each gone to different stores or together to the same stores.



## 5 The gapped annex analysis

Cable (2017) argues that Pro[x-NP] in Russian, Polish, and Tlingit is appositional. Cable’s analysis of Russian *my s Petej* “we with Peter” = ‘Peter and I’ is sketched in (24), where the angled brackets indicate silent material.

(24) *my s Petej* ‘Peter and I’ = [we [ $\langle$ I $\rangle$  with Peter]]

On this account, the construction involves ellipsis or gapping of the first person singular pronoun (*ja* ‘I’), and the overt connector *s* ‘with’ provides the conjunct or coordination relation between the silent singular pronoun and “Peter”, plus potential comitative semantics. As Icelandic Pro[NP] does not contain any overt connector, and does not have comitative semantics, this analysis does not carry straightforwardly over to Icelandic, but two similar analyses come to mind. They are sketched in (25).

(25) a. *við María* ‘Mary and I’ = [we  $\langle$ I & $\rangle$  Mary]  
 b. *við María* ‘Mary and I’ = [we Mary  $\langle$ & I $\rangle$ ]

The analysis in (25a) was suggested by Sigurðsson (2006); see also Thráinsson (2007: 91–92); Wood (2009). A virtue of the analysis in (25b) is that it conforms directly with the overt order of the pronoun and its annex, and also that the gap is a phrase, [<sub>&p</sub> & NP] (on the widely adopted analysis in Johannessen 1998). We believe that (25b) is on the right track and refer to it as the *gapped annex analysis*.

Even if the gapped annex analysis in (25b) is on the right track, it is not complete. Consider the apposition structure in (26).

(26) *Við, María og ég, komum á morgun.* [we (i.e.) [Mary [& I]]]  
 we Mary and I come on tomorrow  
 ‘We, Mary and I, are coming tomorrow.’

The most natural reading of constructions like *við(,) María og ég* in (26) is an appositional reading, yielding intonation breaks, indicated by commas in writing. Such a reading is impossible for Pro[NP] constructions like *við María*; an appositional reading of *við María*, ‘we, that is, Mary’ is nonsensical and completely excluded.

Apposition structures also differ syntactically from Pro[NP]; as illustrated in (27a), they can be discontinuous (as can Pro[x-NP] in Russian, Finnish, etc.), and as shown in (27b) their internal order can be reversed in left dislocation or hanging topic constructions.

(27) a. *Við komum á morgun, María og ég.*  
 we come on tomorrow Mary and I  
 ‘We are coming tomorrow, Mary and I.’  
 b. *María og ég, við komum á morgun.*  
 Mary and I we come on tomorrow  
 ‘(As for) Mary and me, we are coming tomorrow.’

In contrast, as we have seen, Icelandic Pro[NP] can never be reversed and the pronoun and its annex are always glued or locked together, cannot be disjoint or split. Thus, Pro[NP] and apposition structures such as *Við(,) María og ég* ‘We(,) Mary and I’ are syntactically different. Nevertheless, they are semantically almost equivalent (as the annex in *við María* contains a silent conjunct, ‘and I’, etc., see below). They are not entirely equivalent, though, at least not in information structure, as appositions, such as *María og ég* ‘Mary and

I' in (26) and (27), are not at issue, in contrast to Pro[NP] expressions (see Potts 2005 on at-issue and not-at-issue expressions). However, it is difficult to tease the two apart, and we will not try to do so here.

The fact that the pronoun and its annex are always interlocked is a central fact of the Icelandic Pro[NP] construction. Any approach to this unusual DP type must come up with a story on this lock effect. We account for it by postulating that Pro[NP] has a silent head between the pronoun and its annex, which we refer to as the *lock*. At first sight, the lock would seem to be *sui generis*. However, we propose that the lock is a general property of plural pronouns rather than a special property of Pro[NP]. As mentioned in Section 2, plain plural pronouns can be truth-functionally non-distinct from Pro[NP]: Icelandic *við*, English *we*, Russian *my*, and so on, *can* refer to 'Mary and I'.<sup>24</sup> Consider (28).

- (28)
- a. *Mary and I* are coming tomorrow, but *we* will be late.
  - b. *Mary* does not really like *me*, but *we* get along.
  - c. *Mary* believes that *we* will make it in time.
  - d. *Mary* promised John that *we* will go there.
  - e. Peter said to *Mary* that *we* should be there in time.

The pronoun *we* does not have to have only the reading 'Mary and I' in all these cases; the relevant point is merely that it *can* have this reading, raising the question of how this reading is represented in syntax. That it is syntactic (and not merely semantic/pragmatic) is suggested by a number of facts, for example by dual/plural distinctions in many languages (see Corbett 2000), in particular dual/plural agreement distinctions in languages like Gothic and Slovenian, for example Gothic *wit nimōs* 'we.DU [both] take.DU' vs. *weis nimam* 'we.PL [all] take.PL'. English does not have such distinctions in its pronominal and verbal systems, but it does in quantifiers: *we both went* vs. *we all went*. While *we both* can refer to 'Mary and I', *we all* cannot (in normal language use). That is, when deciding between *we both* and *we all*, syntax must "know" whether *we* refers to "individual *x* and I", for example 'Mary and I', or "plural *x* and I", for example 'Peter, Mary and I' or 'they and I'.

It seems, then, that the various readings of plural pronouns, for instance the reading 'Mary and I' of *we*, are read or reconstructed into syntax, before syntax can proceed in making lexical distinctions that depend on the pronominal reading. If so, Icelandic *við*, English *we*, Russian *my*, and so on, *can* have the same syntactic representation as Icelandic *við María* 'Mary and I'. We thus propose that plain plural pronouns *are* syntactic Pro[NP]s, with a silent lock *and* a silent annex.<sup>25</sup> If so, the lock between the pronoun and its annex in Icelandic Pro[NP] is an inherent property of plural pronouns rather than a specific property of the Pro[NP] construction. The lock can be broken by syntactic and/or PF means. One such means is the introduction of an overt connector in the Russian/Finnish Pro[x-NP] type, and another one is the introduction of intonation breaks in appositional constructions. Accordingly, appositional constructions and Russian/Finnish Pro[x-NP] constructions can be split or disjoint. This suggests that the Russian/Finnish constructions start out with the silent lock, the lock subsequently being broken by *with*-insertion in syntax or PF.

<sup>24</sup> See Büring (2005, chapter 9) on coreference and binding of plural pronouns and noun phrases.

<sup>25</sup> This understanding of plural pronouns meets challenges, as discussed by Collins & Postal (2012) and Sigurðsson (2017). One is that *we* does not always really include the speaker (as in *We finally beat Napoleon at Waterloo two centuries ago*). Sigurðsson suggests that this problem is resolved if the speaker category merely needs to be linked to the content of *we* in the speaker's own judgment (although it most typically is included).

We hypothesize that spelling out the annex generally breaks the lock, and that Icelandic Pro[NP] is special in being exempted from this lock breaking (while the lock is broken in other Icelandic constructions, including overt comitative constructions, see the next paragraph). If so, the lock is broken in the *we linguists* type as opposed to pure Pro[NP] constructions, such as *við Ólafur. We(,) linguists*, as also Icelandic *við(,) málfræðingar(nir)* “we(,) linguists(-the)”, can have intonation breaks. This is excluded for *við Ólafur*, *við María*. Notice that this implies that our indirect head-complement analysis of Pro[NP] does *not* carry over to APCs of the *we linguists* type. As the lock is broken in *we linguists*, it cannot function as a mediating connector; accordingly, *we linguists* may be analyzed as a direct head-complement construction, as argued by Postal (1966) and many others since.

Much like for example English, Icelandic has a comitative construction with an overt preposition, *við ásamt Ólafi* ‘we.NOM along with Olaf.DAT’ or *við með Ólafi* ‘we.NOM with Olaf.DAT’, but here there is no (effective, unbroken) lock between the pronoun and the PP complement. The pronoun and the PP can be (and most commonly are) disjoint, and the pronoun cannot get a singular reading; the PP does not contain a silent coordination, so it is excluded for *við* to single out a conjunct within the PP.

Adopting a central idea also pursued in Vassilieva & Larson (2005) (without adopting all their technical details), we conceive of plural pronouns as sets of variables, {X, Y}, as mentioned in Section 1. We describe this in (29), where SP = speaker and AD = addressee (and where the lock addition is ours).

- (29) a. we = [<sub>DP</sub> {X<sub>SP</sub>, Y} [<sub>•P</sub> ◀ [NP]]  
 b. you.PL = [<sub>DP</sub> {X<sub>AD</sub>, Y} [<sub>•P</sub> ◀ [NP]]  
 c. they = [<sub>DP</sub> {X<sub>-SP/-AD</sub>, Y} [<sub>•P</sub> ◀ [NP]]

Informally, thus, *we* usually denotes I & Y, plural *you* usually denotes singular *you* & Y, and *they* usually denotes *he/she/it* & Y (see Vassilieva & Larsson 2005: 115). The primary X variable is fixed, as the speaker, the addressee, or a non-speaker/non-addressee, but the secondary Y variable is open to interpretation/reconstruction, depending on the context.

Before proceeding, we note that this raises the question (not addressed by Vassilieva & Larson 2005) of whether the X and Y variables are syntactic features or “merely” semantic. In the general Minimalist model adopted here (Chomsky 2001 and subsequent), the variables must be syntactic features. In this model, semantics has two sources: syntax, that provides “basic semantics”, and pragmatics, that provides “additional semantics”, arising at the C-I interface from the interaction of clausal syntax with the context. Plural pronouns are partly context-sensitive, so they can have some pragmatic semantics or interpretations, but their basic semantics is clearly syntactic.

The Y variable can be constrained or specified in a number of ways. Clusivity is a widely discussed specification of this sort (Cysouw 2003; Siewierska 2004; Filiminova 2005): The first person plural pronoun may include or exclude the addressee, as sketched in (30).

- (30) a. we = {X<sub>SP</sub>, Y}                      unspecified *we*  
 b. we = {X<sub>SP</sub>, Y}, Y = AD            inclusive *we*  
 c. we = {X<sub>SP</sub>, Y}, Y = -AD          exclusive *we*

The central reading of inclusive *we*, ‘you.SG and I’, can be analyzed as in (31); the angled brackets indicate silent material.

- (31) [<sub>we=DP</sub> {X<sub>SP</sub>, Y} < [<sub>•P</sub> ◀ [<sub>NP</sub> Y = AD & X<sub>SP</sub>]] >]            inclusive *we* = ‘you.SG and I’

On this account, the X variable in plural pronouns is singular, thereby licensing singular readings of the silent X conjunct in the NP annex. Inclusive *we* can have more readings than just the central one in (31), 'you.SG and we', 'you.PL and I', 'you.PL and we' (see Cysouw 2003; Siewierska 2004), but it is difficult to distinguish between these in languages like Icelandic and English, which make no morphological distinctions between these readings; they are perhaps pragmatically derived at the C-I interface. However, if, for example, *we* = 'you.SG and we', has a special syntactic representation, it can be analyzed as in (32).

- (32)  $[_{we=DP} \{X_{sp}, Y\} <[_{eP} \llbracket [_{NP} Y = AD \& X_{sp} \& W] \rrbracket >]$  inclusive *we* = 'you.SG and we'  
'you.SG' 'and we'

Also in this case, the silent X within the NP annex gets a singular reading (whereas its conjunction with W yields the plural reading 'we'). Pronouns that translate as 'we' in English can have more distinctions, commonly dual/plural distinctions, such as the distinction between Old Norse dual *við* 'we two' and plural *vér* 'we all' (without a clear addressee inclusion/exclusion), but we will not probe further into this. Importantly, the annex approach yields an effective tool to exactly analyze the various readings of plural pronouns.

In Pro[NP], the Y variable is lexically specified, as illustrated for the singular reading of the pronoun in *við Ólafur* in (33), where, again, the angled brackets indicate silent material.

- (33)  $[_{við=DP} \{X_{sp}, Y\} [_{eP} \llbracket [_{NP} Y = Olaf <\& X_{sp} > \rrbracket ]]$  *við Ólafur* = 'Olaf and I'

The alternative reading, with the less central plural interpretation of the pronoun, is illustrated in (34).

- (34)  $[_{við=DP} \{X_{sp}, Y\} [_{eP} \llbracket [_{NP} Y = Olaf <\& X_{sp} \& W > \rrbracket ]]$  *við Ólafur* = 'Olaf and we'

We find it worth pointing out here that Icelandic plural pronouns seem to be bimorphic, *v-ið*, *þ-ið*, and *þ-eir*, *þ-ær*, *þ-au*. An intriguing thought is that the first element or "morpheme" actually represents the singular X variable in the pronoun, enabling the pronoun to identify and license the singular reading of X within the NP annex, across a lexicalized Y variable. This is clearly not a sufficient condition for Pro[NP] (cf. French *n-ous*, *v-ous*, Italian *n-oi*, *v-oi*, etc.), but it might be a necessary one. We leave this for future research.

The X variable is already in the pronoun variable set, so a silent copy of it within the annex might seem to be unnecessary. However, there must be a hidden conjunction in the structures, or else the coordination reading could not be derived (recall that there is no such reading in overtly comitative constructions in Icelandic, "we (along) with Olaf", etc.). In our analysis, the hidden conjunction or conjunctions are within the annex. Having the conjunction(s) within the pronominal set instead, between X and Y, is not an option, as this would wrongly eliminate the difference between *við* and coordinates such as *ég og þú*: both would be  $[_{DP} \{X_{sp} \& Y\}]$  on this approach. In our analysis, *ég og þú* has the structure  $[_{DP} X_{sp} [_{\&P} \& Y = AD]]$  (or simply  $[_{DP} \text{ég} [_{\&P} \text{og þú}]]$ ), whereas *við* =  $[_{við=DP} \{X_{sp}, Y\} <[_{eP} \llbracket [_{NP} Y \& X_{sp} > \rrbracket ]]$ . In addition, this general  $[_{DP} \{X_{sp} \& Y\}]$  analysis would raise the question of why  $[_{DP} \{X_{sp} \& Y\}]$  would not always be spelled out as coordination; economy considerations would seem to predict that plural pronouns should either be marked or

nonexistent under this approach.<sup>26</sup> Notice further that while plain *við/we* denotes a partly open set (for example ‘I + Olaf, Mary, Peter’), *ég og þú* (or *ég og Ólafur*) does not.

At first sight, it might seem to be a conceivable alternative to have a conjunction between the pronoun and the annex (instead of the lock), but that would make *við Ólafur* non-distinct from *við og Ólafur*, which would exclude the central ‘Olaf and I’ reading. This would also be problematic for the plural reading of the pronoun. Even though this reading is best rendered by the English translation ‘Olaf and we’ or ‘we and Olaf’, *við Ólafur* (*við* = plural) and *við og Ólafur* are not equivalent. In *við og Ólafur*, Olaf is always excluded from the reference set of the pronoun; the pronoun refers to ‘I + Z’ (= *we*), where Z explicitly does not include Olaf (just as in English *we and Olaf*). In *við Ólafur* (*við* = plural), in contrast, Olaf is included in the reference set of the pronoun, ‘I + Z + Olaf’; the only difference between plain *við* and *við Ólafur* is that the annex specifies that Olaf does belong to the reference set of the pronoun.

In sum: Plural pronouns contain a feature variable set, {X, Y}, and coordination semantics. The coordination cannot be within the variable set, as that would conflate plural pronouns and regular overt coordination, *you and I*, and so on. And in Pro[NP], the coordination cannot be between Pro and NP, as that would exclude the central singular reading of the pronoun. Thus, we conclude, the silent coordinator must be within the NP annex, in both “we Olaf” and in the silent NP annex in plain *we/við*. Spelling out the whole NP annex, including the coordinator, yields adjunction structures, as in *we, Olaf and I* and *we, you and I*, different from both “we Olaf” and plain *we/við*, and spelling out the coordinator plus or minus *Olaf* yields ungrammatical *\*we Olaf and*, and *\*we and*.

There is a general restriction on the relation between the X and the Y variables, such that the Y variable cannot include or overlap with the singular referent of the X variable.<sup>27</sup> Thus, *we* cannot mean “plural speaker”, ‘I & I’ (see Boas 1911; Benveniste 1966; Bobaljik 2008).<sup>28</sup> *They* can mean ‘he/she & he/she’, but the two “hes/shes” are not equivalent; the ‘he/she’ referred to by the Y variable is necessarily distinct from the ‘he/she’ referred to be the X variable (as sometimes made explicit by gender, as in Icelandic neuter *þau*, referring to males + non-males or females + non-females (or neuter(s) + neuter(s)). Similarly, even though plural *you* can mean ‘you.SG & you.SG’ the two singular “yous” must (obviously) be distinct; the Y variable ‘you’ cannot include or overlap with the X variable ‘you’. As a matter of fact, no language is known to indisputably have a plural pronoun that specifically refers to addressees only, excluding everybody else (Simon 2005; Bobaljik 2008).

Our analysis minimizes the difference between Pro[NP]s and plain plural pronouns, but it does not eliminate it. Without lexical specification, the NP annex is unsaturated, and *við* can include unlimited salient (primarily human) referents, in addition to the speaker: Olaf, Mary, Peter, and so on. With lexical specification (plus the representation of the X variable in the silent conjunct), the annex is either fully saturated or partly saturated. When fully saturated, any other referents than the lexicalized one (and the silent X variable) are excluded, and *við Ólafur* then means only ‘Olaf and I’. When partly saturated, the lexicalized referent is included, without excluding other potential referents, and *við Ólafur* then means ‘Olaf and we’.

<sup>26</sup> Recall also, from the end of Section 4, that *\*við sem Ólafur* ‘we as Olaf’ cannot involve an exhaustive comparison of the pronoun and the overt annex, as the annex, in addition, contains a silent conjunct.

<sup>27</sup> Plural honorific pronouns, such as *we* used by a king or a queen to refer to themselves, may be conceived of as associative plurals: ‘I and my followers’ or ‘I and what I stand for’. The Y variable multiplies or elevates the X variable, but the pronoun is not understood as a plural speaker.

<sup>28</sup> The pronoun *we* in “chorus usage” or “mass speaking” (in the sense discussed in Cysouw 2003: 73–74) involves multiple simultaneous use of the pronoun *we* in roughly the sense ‘I and others here’.

## 6 Concluding remarks

We have argued that Pro[NP] constructions are constructed in a way that reflects a more general, deeper property of plural pronouns: that they are constructed from a set of variables and an annex, which is headed by a silent head, the lock,  $\kappa$ . The set of variables includes a primary variable, X, identifying the speaker, addressee, or neither, and a secondary variable, Y, which is context dependent and can be constrained or specified by the annex in a number of ways. What is unusual about the Icelandic Pro[NP] construction is that the annex can be partly lexicalized without breaking the lock. In this way, plural pronouns in general have a singular reading of the X variable, one that is usually not made overtly obvious. The overall picture strongly suggests that pronouns do not have meanings that are given in a presyntactic lexicon, but that plural pronouns are built out of features whose interpretation is syntax-/context-dependent. Our analysis also supports the view that silent elements ("dark matter") are pervasive in syntax (as argued in Sigurðsson 2004 and much subsequent work).

Exceptional phenomena often throw new light on the nature of more general phenomena. Icelandic Pro[NP] is highly exceptional, and it does indeed throw new light on the nature of plural pronouns. Our analysis involves some unorthodox ingredients, not surprisingly, in view of these circumstances. At first sight, the lock might seem to be *sui generis*, but we have argued that it is actually a general property of plural pronouns. In addition, we have argued that plural pronouns, bare as well as in Pro[NP], have a silent copy of the X variable in the NP annex, and that the reading of the X variable is consistently singular. This is a universal property of plural pronouns, we claim.

We have shown that the widely adopted *direct* head-complement analysis of APCs like English *we linguists* does not work for Icelandic Pro[NP]. Instead, we have argued that there is an *indirect* head-complement relation between the pronoun and its annex in the Icelandic Pro[NP] type, mediated by the silent lock, which brings the Icelandic construction in line with the Russian and Finnish type of Pro[x-NP]s, "we with Peter" = 'Peter and I', and so on. The difference is that the overt connector in the Russian/Finnish type breaks the lock between the pronoun and its annex, thereby making it possible for the annex to move from the pronoun, or vice versa.

## Abbreviations

In glosses:

ACC = accusative, DAT = dative, DU = dual, F = feminine, GEN = genitive, INSTR = instrumental, M = masculine, N = neuter, NOM = nominative, PL = plural, SG = singular, 1 = first person, 2 = second person, 3 = third person

Others:

AD = addressee, APC = adnominal pronoun constructions, ECM = exceptional case marking constructions, C-I = conceptual-intentional interface, NP = noun phrases of various sizes, PrC = preproprial constructions, SP = speaker, Pro[NP] = Plural Pronoun[NP] Constructions, Pro[x-NP] = Plural Pronoun[x-NP/NP-x] Constructions (where x is a connector/preposition)

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## Competing Interests

The authors have no competing interests to declare.

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